



WEEKLY STUDY

WEEK 4

Pastor Gary stepped in this week to share about the call story of Levi found in Luke 5. Levi (also known as Matthew) was a tax collector which meant that he was not a respected member of society. But Jesus saw him—he noticed him—and called him away from a life of cheating and deception and into a life of discipleship. As you read and pray this week, may you become more aware that Jesus sees you and calls you deeper into a new life of discipleship.

Peace of Christ,
Pastor Mark Youngman

If you are studying with your Providence Small Group or Discipleship Group, you can share from daily readings as well as the additional questions at the bottom of this guide. If you would like to get connected visit prov.church/smallgroups.

Find a time each day to read the passage of scripture and follow the daily prayer prompt.

DAILY STUDY

MONDAY: LUKE 5.27-32 (ESV)

Afterward, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector named Levi sitting at a kiosk for collecting taxes. Jesus said to him, "Follow me."

²⁸ *Levi got up, left everything behind, and followed him.* ²⁹ *Then Levi threw a great banquet for Jesus in his home. A large number of tax collectors and others sat down to eat with them.* ³⁰ *The Pharisees and their legal experts grumbled against his disciples. They said, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?"*

³¹ *Jesus answered, "Healthy people don't need a doctor, but sick people do."* ³² *I didn't come to call righteous people but sinners to change their hearts and lives."*

- It is natural for us to wonder what Jesus saw in Levi. All we read is that he saw him sitting in his tax booth. He was despised by society. No one would want to befriend a tax collector for fear that he would cheat you. **If you were assembling a team to carry forward an important mission, who would you choose? What characteristics would you look for? The fact that Jesus saw and chose Levi could leave us feeling angry or hopeful. Which is it for you?**

- *Jesus, I confess that I am sometimes no better than a tax collector. I am tempted to look out for my own interests. My hope is that you see me and call me into a changed life of following you. Amen.*

TUESDAY: ISAIAH 58.6-7 (NIV)

“Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen:

to loose the chains of injustice

and untie the cords of the yoke,

to set the oppressed free

and break every yoke?

⁷Is it not to share your food with the hungry

and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—

when you see the naked, to clothe them,

and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?

- The calling of the one who follows Jesus leads to a changed life. We will take on all kinds of practices as we grow in Christ-likeness, but those practices will lead us to be a part of changing the world too. For instance, our fasting can lead to hungry people being fed, and those without homes finding shelter. **How can you begin to turn your practices of prayer, worship, and Scripture reading into an outward expression of God’s love for all of creation?**
- *Lord God, as I walk with Jesus, make me more and more aware of the needs of those around me. Fill me with compassion and equip me to serve. Amen.*

WEDNESDAY: 2 CORINTHIANS 5.17 (NIV)

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

- The most amazing thing about Levi’s call story is that Jesus saw him. With so many people in the world—so many talented, good people—it is easy to feel unseen at times. Instead of trying to make ourselves stand out for God, our starting place is to first accept and delight in how God sees us. He sees in us our new-creation-potential. **What does it mean for you to be *in Christ*? Do you ever struggle to see the new creation Christ is calling you into?**
- *Holy God, you knew me before I was conceived in my mother’s womb. And you know what you intend for me to become. Continue your creative work in me. Amen.*

THURSDAY: LUKE 15.8-10 (NIV)

Suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Doesn’t she light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? ⁹ And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.’ ¹⁰ In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

- Pastor Gary noted the significance of the party that followed the call of Levi in Luke 5. The seeking and saving of the lost is almost always followed by a celebration like the one the woman threw when she found her silver coin. She called the people in her sphere, her friends, and neighbors to celebrate. **Have you ever lost something of significance? Have you ever been the thing that was lost? Is it time to throw a party?**

- *Jesus, thank you for searching in the dark and dusty corners for me. I once was lost but now I am found. Find me here today and rejoice over my repentant heart. Amen.*

FRIDAY: 1 CORINTHIANS 2.9 (NIV)

as it is written:

*“What no eye has seen,
what no ear has heard,
and what no human mind has conceived”—
the things God has prepared for those who love him—*

- We saw in Levi’s story that Jesus sees us not just as we are, but as we can be. God sees our potential. What God has prepared for us is often far beyond what we could imagine, and so faithfully following Jesus is the path to the future version of ourselves! **Can you think of a time when you kept going even though you didn’t know what the future would hold?**
- *Holy God, come and meet me in that place between what I can imagine for my life, and what you know is possible. Amen,*

SATURDAY: ROMANS 3.21-26 (NIV)

But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify.²² This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile,²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,²⁴ and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.²⁵ God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished—²⁶ he did it to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.

- We are all sinners in need of the grace of God displayed through Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection. The gift of the Good News for us is that our Savior sees us, knows us, and has done everything necessary for us to be redeemed. We *only* have to follow him. As Levi experienced, following Jesus requires leaving everything behind. **What have you had to leave behind in order to follow Jesus? Do you ever find it difficult to receive the free gift of grace offered through Jesus?**
- *God, I admit that sometimes it is hard to understand how you give righteousness to me. I believe, help my unbelief. Amen.*

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

As you reflect on the following stories of Jesus calling his disciples, consider when and where Jesus might be calling you to follow him.

Matthew 4.18-22

Mark 1.16-20

Luke 5.1-11, 27-28

- What have/would you have to give up in order to more closely follow Jesus? What does “leaving it all” to follow him look like in your life?
- What attachments or fears might be holding you back from fully following Jesus?